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CONSUMER FRAUD ALERT

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Reports of Fraudulent Natural Gas Residential “Green Sticker” Inspections Taking Place *(For immediate release...)*

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah – The Utah Division of Consumer Protection and Utah Division of Public Utilities joined today in warning citizens using natural gas appliances of a growing scam around the state that could not only affect their pocketbook, but also pose a threat to public safety.

Con artists are taking advantage of the fact regional natural gas supplies are changing. The “Green Sticker” program, a joint effort by the gas utility, regulators, contractors and Rocky Mountain Gas Association, is encouraging customers to get natural gas appliances -- furnaces and water heaters -- inspected and adjusted by 2008, in order to continue to burn safely. Qualified technicians with the program perform the work and place a “Green Sticker” on the appliance to show the work has been performed.

Recent reports indicate scam artists – who are not licensed contractors and not qualified to perform inspections – are going door-to-door and using telemarketers to prey on people’s fears, steal their money, and endanger their homes and family. They often use scare tactics, claiming the person’s home will explode if the service isn’t performed immediately.

Consumers should be informed Questar does NOT use telemarketers, or door-to-door salesmen to solicit business. Neither does legitimate licensed and certified “Green Sticker” contractors.

“You face the possibility of having someone coming into your home and just taking some tools and banging on the furnace a few times, slapping on a counterfeit Green Sticker and collecting a large fee for doing nothing,” said Francine Giani, Executive Director, of the Utah Department of Commerce. “Or, even worse, some of these crooks are actually adjusting furnaces without having been properly trained. This could put a family in real danger.”

Tips being offered by Consumer Protection and Public Utilities to protect you include:

Remember, Questar Gas does not use telemarketers to promote the “Green Sticker” program. If you get a call soliciting a “Green Sticker” inspection claiming affiliation with Questar Gas, hang up as this is a scam.

Questar Gas and legitimate contractors are not going door-to-door soliciting a “Green Sticker” inspection.

Don’t be pressured into a “Green Sticker” inspection by anyone using scare tactics; on the other hand, however, don’t forget to schedule a “Green Sticker” inspection soon, using a properly licensed contractor. Questar Gas is blending gas for a phase in period, but by 2008 all appliances need to be adjusted to make sure they are safe.

“We ask people to help get the word out. If you have senior parents or relatives, or elderly neighbors, go over these warnings with them about these scam artists who might target them,” said Constance White, Director of Utah Division of Public Utilities.

Giani has asked for anyone who thinks they might have already fallen prey to one of these “Green Sticker” scams, or have been contacted by someone selling a “Green Sticker”, to contact Utah Consumer Protection at 801.530.6601.

For help in finding a properly licensed “Green Sticker” contractor:

Call the Rocky Mountain Gas Association at 801.832.9490, or 1.800.729.6791, or go to www.utrmga.org.
Or check your local Yellow Pages under “Heating”.

For more information contact:

Constance White – 801.530.6659
Francine Giani – 801.530.6601
Clark H. Caras – 801.201.9276